

# Northwestern

## BLACK PROFESSIONALS NETWORK



### Our Mission and Values

*The Northwestern University Black Professionals Network strives to build community through our shared experiences to foster open dialogue, leadership, and mentorship that will improve the Northwestern Black professional experience.*

### A Tribute To Our Friend



### Remembering & Celebrating the Life of Rhea Banks

Rhea Banks, Director of Administration at the Bluhm Legal Clinic, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, passed away on February 4. She was a cherished member of the Law School and Northwestern community who fostered unity and advocated for justice. Beyond her roles at the Law School, she served on the Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council (*NUSAC*), and contributed significantly to campus life, notably as a cherished member of the BPN steering committee. Her dedication and kindness touched countless lives, and her loss is deeply felt by all who knew her.



NUSAC's Tribute to  
Rhea

## Journey Narratives



### Toni-Marie Montgomery

**Toni-Marie Montgomery** shared her journey of launching initiatives to elevate the school's visibility and stature throughout her two-decade tenure as the University's first African American dean and the first female dean of the Bienen School of Music. [Read more about Toni-Marie's journey at Northwestern.](#)

## Charles F. Whitaker

Holding both a bachelor's and master's degree from the Medill School of Journalism, Chicago native

**Charles Whitaker** is the first alumnus of the school to serve as dean. Before joining the Medill faculty, Whitaker served as a senior editor at Ebony magazine, reporter at the Miami Herald, and more!

[Learn more about Dean Whitaker and his journey back to Northwestern.](#)



## Black History Month Recap

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Thank you to everyone who joined us for this year's Black History Month programming, exploring the theme of African Americans and the Arts, or the "Black Arts Movement." This year's dialogue sessions centered on ideologies and thoughts about Black self-determination, political beliefs, and African American culture.



## The Politics of Racial Equity and the 2024 Elections

To launch this year's programming, we were honored to welcome back Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for Diversity and Democracy, **Alvin Tillery**. Prof. Tillery shared his insightful views on the current political landscape and emphasized the importance of your vote as we approach this year's election.

More About  
Alvin

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## Black Self-Determination

Our friend, coach, advisor, and facilitator, **Walter Crawford**,

led a session highlighting the significance of Black self-determination and perspective on powers.



### CAPS and HPaW Overview

Staff Therapist **Mikayla Wynter** ([CAPS](#)) and Health Promotions Specialist **Liz Akinboba** ([HPaW](#)) co-hosted a session highlighting the range of programs and services available to our Black students through their respective offices.

Key Resources  
Handout

### The Black Arts Movement: Community and Individual Impact (*Parts I & II*)

**Ellen Burton** led an enriching two-part discussion delving into the Black Self-Determination Theory, encompassing key themes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. We also explored the historical significance of Black artists seizing control and narrating their stories through various mediums such as acting, dance, song, and beyond!



Role of Self-Determination in Well-Being

And Still I Rise by Maya Angelou

### Integrating the Arts to Support Your Well-being and NU Well-being Updates

**Evelyn Cordero**, HR Well-being Specialist, led an engaging session on integrating the arts into our daily and long-term well-being journey. She also provided valuable updates





and resources regarding University well-being initiatives, ensuring we're equipped for our holistic wellness endeavors.

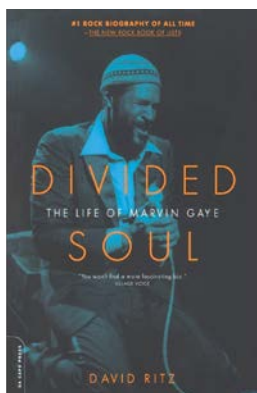
Integrating the Arts  
Presentation

## NUIT Celebrates Black History Month

The Northwestern IT D.E.I. Steering Committee hosted a dialogue series: "What Black History Means to Me". [Read about the 60-year journey to getting Black History Month nationally recognized.](#)



## Quarterly Book Club Discussion



### The Vanishing Half

On March 13, we met to discuss David Ritz's book [Divided Soul: The Life of Marvin Gaye](#). Thank you to Monica L. Lewers, Northwestern Medicine Research Administrator, who facilitated this session.



### Take My Hand

All are invited to join us this quarter for a discussion on Dolen Perkins-Valdez's book [Take My Hand](#). Maureen Knight-Burrell, Associate Director of Application Development and Operations for NUIT and BPN Steering Committee member, will facilitate this session. Stay tuned for further details and information!



### BPN Juneteenth Celebration

Wednesday, June 12, 2024

Black House, 1914 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL

*Join us to celebrate Black independence and to fellowship with the BPN community.  
More information coming soon!*

## In The News



[What Should Democrats Do to “Win Back” Black Men?](#) | Pro. Alive Tillery explores what it will take for Democrats to win over the Black male vote during the 2024 election.

[U. of Florida axes DEI office under GOP-led law](#) | Following a 2023 statute, the University of Florida eliminates all D.E.I.-related positions.

[Gov. JB Pritzker pitches more than \\$20 million for initiatives to improve Black maternal health](#)

[Texas school legally punished Black student over hairstyle](#) | A state District Judge rules in favor of a Texas school district after they say the length of a teen's hair violates dress code.

[Relaunch of the Northwestern BPN website](#) | After months of hard work, your BPN steering committee is excited to share the recent refresh of the BPN website.

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## Share Your Good News!

Your BPN steering committee wanted to celebrate all the exciting accomplishments happening across our community. Have a service anniversary coming? Have you achieved a major milestone? Share your good news with us!

[Submit Good News](#)

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## Keep in Touch!

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